Alabama Chess Antics

The Official Publication of the Alabama Chess Federation

Winter 2020

Inside this issue:

Dothan Open 2019 *by Ken Goodman*	**4**
Queen of Hearts tournament report *by TD Caesar Lawrence*	**6**
Selected Games *by NM Yury Barnakov*	**6**
2020 All-Girls State Chess Championship *by Jonathan Rasberry*	**10**
Wang–Velidandla *by Ranae Bartlett & Michael B. Guthrie*	**12**
The Winner's Circle *Photos by Caesar Lawrence & Scott Varagona*	**14**
Baskarraj-Savoie *by Samuel Baskarraj*	**15**

The group photo from the 2020 All-Girls State Chess Championship. (Photo by Scott Wilhelm.)

Greetings from the Editor

Many thanks to everyone for the tremendous outpouring of submissions for this *Antics*. We have stories and games from tournaments like the Dothan Open, the Queen of Hearts and the Tom Nard Memorial, as well as a key game to decide the outcome of the All-Girls State Championship. Many players gave us entertaining and instructive insights about their own games, and we definitely want to see more of that in future *Antics*.

By the way, I am pleased to announce the winner of this first "Game of the Quarter" contest: **Ken Goodman**! Ken impressed the judges with his clear and down-to-earth annotations of a game with lots of ups-and-downs. Although there were many other games of high quality in this issue, the judges chose Ken's game as the best overall submission.

Now that we have seen this first round of submissions for the contest, the judges would like to give ACF members some additional guidelines about future submissions:

1. Players are encouraged to annotate their *own* games, as that makes for a much stronger submission.
2. A game does not have to be "perfectly played" to be chosen; rather, we are looking at the overall quality of the submission, including instructional or entertainment value, well-written annotations, personal insights about your thoughts during the game, etc.
3. You may submit as many games to the *Antics* as you like, but you must select only *one* game you have submitted to be a candidate for Game of the Quarter.

The winner of the "Photo of the Quarter" contest is: **Scott Wilhelm**, for his excellent photo on page 10 of this *Antics*. Thanks for really helping to bring the All-Girls State Championship to life in these pages, Scott!

Finally, on a sadder note, I must report that the ACF had to cancel this year's Alabama Scholastic Chess Championships due to the coronavirus pandemic. Various other tournaments in the spring have been (or may be) cancelled. I know we all look forward to whenever life will return to normal; it will be so nice to enjoy the company of our fellow chess players in tournament play again.

Remember: the deadline for submissions for the Spring 2020 issue of the *Antics* is May 31.

Sincerely,
-Scott Varagona

ACF Membership

Any individual may become a **Regular Member** upon the payment of annual dues of **$15.00**. Regular members may enter ACF tournaments and receive special publications or notices from ACF as they are issued. Any chess club seeking to become an **Affiliate** is required to file the Affiliate Information Form with the Secretary of the ACF and pay annual dues of **$35.00**. Benefits of becoming an affiliate include the right to bid to host ACF-sanctioned events, such as the Alabama State Championship, and to receive advertising through the ACF for your tournaments.

Alabama Chess Leaderboard

Top 50 Ratings (retrieved from uschess.org on 3/27/2020)

Editor's Note: Could this be the first time ever that the top 25 players in Alabama are all at least Expert strength?... Either way, I feel we should be proud of the tremendous depth of chess skill we have in this state right now.

1	MATTHEW PUCKETT	2305	26	FARUK E ERGIN	1992
2	YURY A BARNAKOV	2283	27	JAMES LINHOLM	1978
3	SCOTT VARAGONA	2270	28	CHRISTOPHER J TREES	1976
4	AMEER S GHOBRIAL	2235	29	MILES MELVIN	1974
5	STEPHEN ADAMS	2232	30	OM BADHE	1970
6	KEVIN WANG	2210	31	TERRENCE EDINBURGH	1916
7	BILL MELVIN	2200	32	JEFF TOBIN	1907
8	ANDY P MAY	2146	33	KIRK D PETTY	1900
9	JOSHUA MCCLELLAN	2117	34	KENNETH W GOODMAN	1899
10	STEPHEN GRAVELING	2116	35	MARK L LIATTI	1898
11	BRENT H INMAN	2105	36	JOSHUA M VARNER	1897
12	JOSEPH JURJEVICH	2103	37	TYLER W FREEMAN	1892
13	CHIBUZO C ILONZE	2103	38	RANDY W COPE	1891
14	JONATHAN RASBERRY	2098	39	MICHAEL B GUTHRIE	1891
15	ANDY REEDER	2097	40	TIM BOND	1855
16	AARON DECORD	2097	41	ROBERT LUBIN	1831
17	CHARLES L MEIDINGER	2067	42	JOEL N FRIEDMAN	1823
18	TEJAS V THORAT	2066	43	JOHN DAUGHERTY	1821
19	THOMAS DENTON	2053	44	CAESAR W LAWRENCE	1817
20	GEORGE RUSYNIAK	2038	45	XAVIER BRUNI	1808
21	CHARLES T KOCH	2014	46	SARVAGNA VELIDANDLA	1803
22	MICHAEL W PORCELLI	2012	47	RAY DOWNS	1802
23	ZACHARY SNOW II	2012	48	CHARLES H ANTHONY	1790
24	WILLIAM DANIEL FOX	2012	49	JOSHUA N WAKEFIELD	1789
25	ASHISH ACHARYA	2002	50	PATRICK DOWD	1786

Game of the Quarter:

Dothan Open 2019

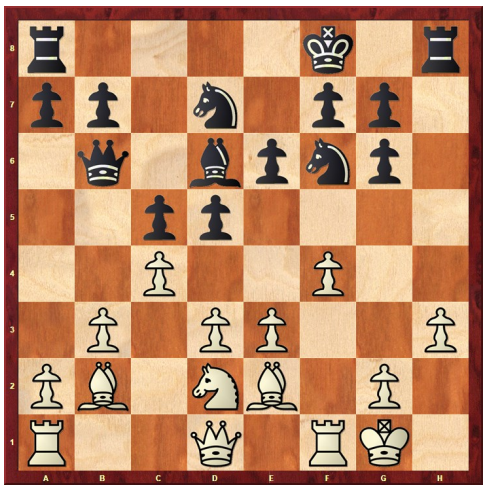
by Ken Goodman

I had a very nice time at the 2019 Dothan Open. I started strong with 3 straight wins, but botched my last round game against my old nemesis Tim Bond, finishing perhaps one blundered piece short of a GREAT tournament.

Rather than sharing my best game of the day, I am sending the one that got the most attention from spectators (with very light notes).

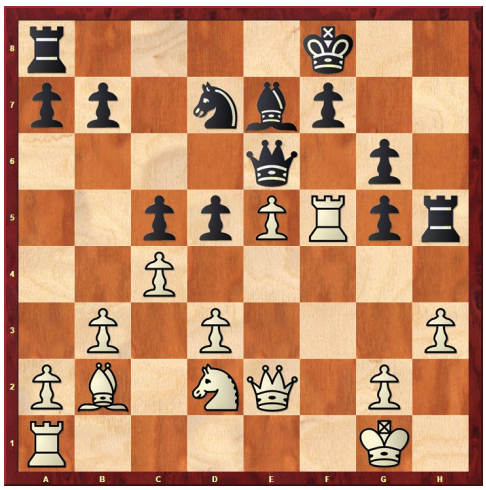
Ken Goodman - Taher Rahgooy
(1876) (1766)
Dothan Open (Round 3), 12-14-2019

1.Nf3 d5 2.e3 c5 3.b3 Bf5 4.Bb2 Nd7 5.Nh4 Be4 6.d3 Bg6 7.f4 e6 8.Nxg6 hxg6 9.Nd2 Qa5 10.Be2 Ngf6 11.0–0 Bd6 12.h3 Qb6 13.c4 Kf8



A surprising move. Seems to me this is asking for trouble, but freebie engine Fruit2.1 actually likes it.

14.e4 Nh5 15.e5 Be7 16.Qe1 g5 17.Bxh5 Rxh5 18.f5 exf5 19.Rxf5 Qe6 20.Qe2 g6



21.Rxf7+

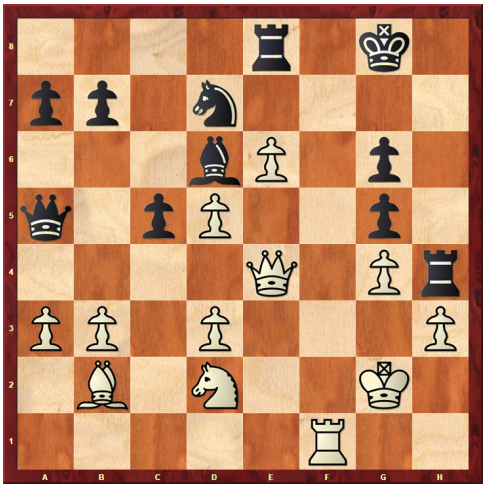
A horrible blunder. I had planned to play Raf1, but decided it was too slow. I was so focused on the merits of Q vs 2 Rs after 21...Qxf7 22.Raf1 that I simply didn't notice that ...Kxf7 was possible.

21...Kxf7

After this revelation I was sure I

was losing, but hey, might as well press the attack and see what comes of it.

22.Qf3+ Kg8 23.cxd5 Qf5 24.Qe2 Rh4 25.g4 Qf4 26.Kg2 Re8 27.Rf1 Qb4 28.e6 Bd6 29.a3 Qa5 30.Qe4

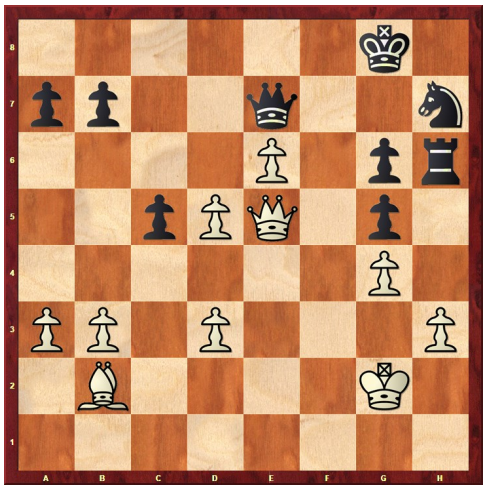


Now I seemed to be back in the driver's seat, but again I was careless, not bothering to evaluate 31...Qxd2+ 31.Rf2 Qxf2+. 30.Nc4 should have been played first—or maybe just 30.Ne4 to regain some material.

30...Nf8 31.Nc4 Qc7 32.Rf7 Re7 33.Nxd6 Qxd6 34.Qf3

The engine has us roughly equal after this weak move, but fortunately my opponent was human. 34.Be5 instead is crushing, e.g., 34...Qd8 35.Bf6.

34...Nh7 35.Qe4 Rh6 36.Rxe7 Qxe7 37.Qe5



37...Nf6

After this slip the game is basically over. 37...Nf8 instead prolongs the finish, but White's active Q and R plus the advancing center pawns are hard to resist.

38.Qxf6 Rh7 39.Qxg6+ Kf8 40.Qf5+ Ke8 41.Bf6 Qc7 42.Be5 Qa5 43.Qg6+ Kd8 44.Qg8+ 1–0 ■

The 2019 Dothan Open Premiere winners (left to right): Jeff Tobin, Tim Bond, Ken Goodman. Photo by TD Caesar Lawrence.

Queen of Hearts Tournament Report

by TD Caesar Lawrence

The **Queen of Hearts** celebrated the 48th year of chess competition. We had 45 rated chess players to participate from 6 states. Also, 30 students from 10 schools played in the Scholastic section.

The Premiere Champion is **NM Yury Barnakov** of Birmingham. Yury scored 4.5/5 points and clinched the first-place honors. The Reserve Champion is **Kristian Jordan** of Hoover. He scored 4.5/5 points.

We are grateful to the **AUM** School of Science, Division of Continuing Education, and Dr. Mariano Runco (Associate Professor for Economics) for hosting the Queen of Hearts again this year. Their continuous support for our efforts to promote chess is truly appreciated. ■

2020 Queen of Hearts Winners

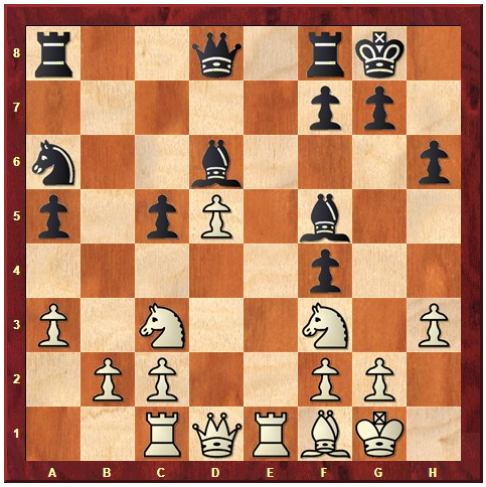
Premiere Section (1600+) 1st place: Yury Barnakov – 4.5 points
Reserve Section (U1600) 1st place: Kristian Jordan – 4.5 points
Novice Section (K-12; not rated) 1st place: Indigo Daniels – 5.5 points
Novice Team (K-12; not rated) 1st place: Forest Avenue Magnet School (Montgomery, AL) – 18 points.
Chess Coach: Caesar Lawrence and Jonathan Rasberry
2nd place: Dear Valley Elementary School (Hoover, AL) – 15.5 points.
Chess Coach: Caesar Lawrence

Selected Games

by NM Yury Barnakov

Some selected games from the recent tournaments: Queens of Hearts and Tom Nard Memorial (2020) and one game from the Georgia State Championship of May 2019.

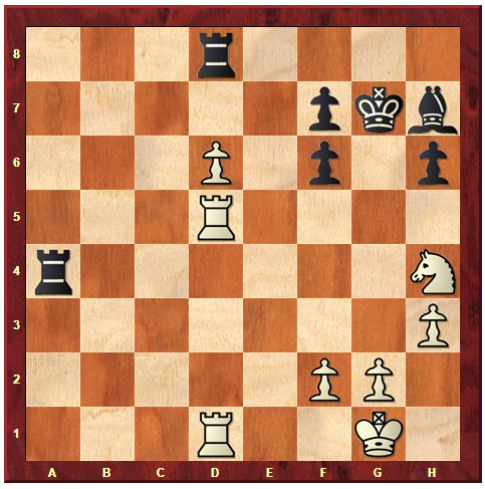
Zachary Snow II – NM Yury Barnakov
(2019) (2284)
Queen of Hearts, 2-8-2020



White to play.

21.Bd3 Black played the opening poorly and ended up with a lost position: no pawn, no compensation for the material deficiency. In this situation, there are two ways: to make an obvious move, which will conclude with an obvious game loss, or try to unbalance the position, where there is a chance to save the game. One element of it is to keep as many pieces as possible on the board. **21...Bc8 22.Nb5 Rb8** Rook activation, aiming at the pawn b2. **23.c4 Nc7 24.Nxd6 Qxd6 25.Qd2 Ne8** The Black knight goes to d6 to block the d5 passed pawn and the Black Queen relocates to the active f6 square. **26.Ne5 Qf6 27.Rb1 a4 28.Bc2 Nd6 29.Bxa4**

29...f3! Helps to continue to unbalance the position. **30.Nxf3 Bf5 31.Rbc1 Rxb2 32.Qc3 Rfb8 33.Qxf6 gxf6 34.Re3 Ra2 35.Nh4 Bh7** The threat is ...Ra8 to win a3 or ...R8b2 to create activity. **36.Bb5 Nxb5 37.cxb5 Rxb5 38.Re8+ Kg7 39.Rd1** Getting some chances for black! **39...Rb7 40.d6 Rd7 41.Re7 Rd8 42.Rc7 Rxa3 43.Rxc5 Ra6 44.Rcd5 Ra4** In time trouble, it is advisable to do "long" moves.

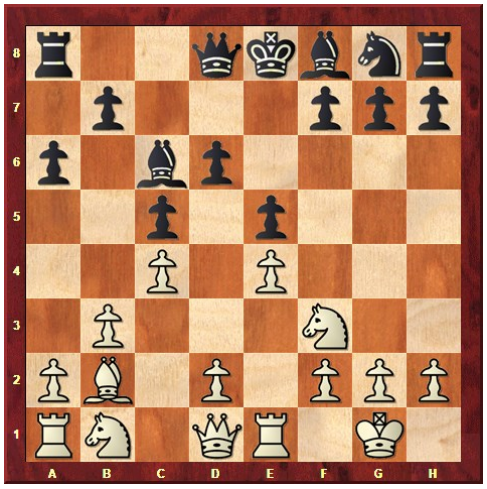


45.g4 Ra3 46.Kh2 Ra2 47.Nf5+ Bxf5 48.Rxf5 Ra6 49.d7 Ra7 50.Rd6 Rdxd7 51.Rfxf6 Mistake; it would be better to play Rdxf6 and keep all rooks on the board. **51...Rxd6 52.Rxd6** White still has winning chances, but with lack of time and Black's precise resistance, the game ended up in a draw. ½–½

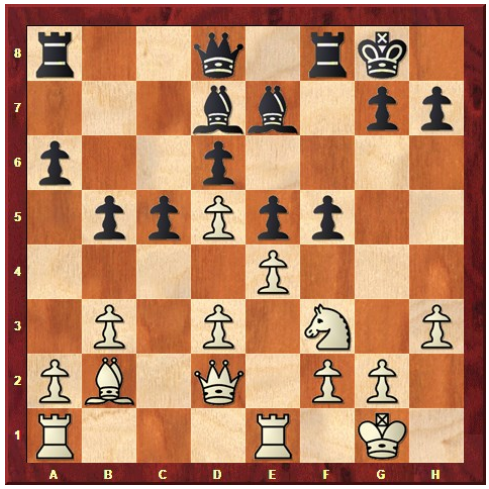
Zachary Snow II – NM Yury Barnakov
(2015) (2288)
Tom Nard Memorial (Rd 2), 2-29-2020

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.b3 Nc6 4.Bb2 d6 5.Bb5 Bd7 It is better to keep a good pawn structure. **6.0–0 a6 7.Bxc6 Bxc6**

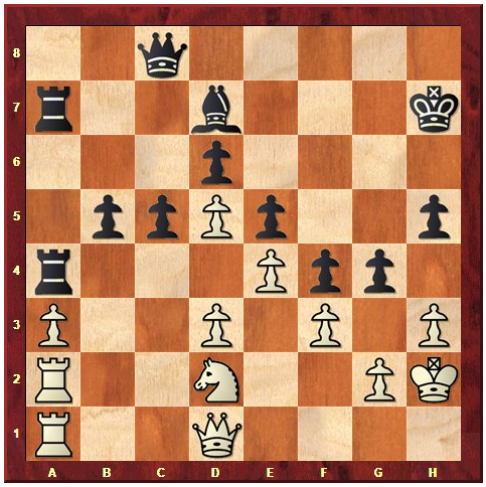
8.Re1 e5 White is better developed, but the position has a closed characteristic; thus, tempo doesn't matter as much as in an open position. **9.c4?** Positional mistake; it would be better to play 9.c3 Ne7 10.d4 Ng6 11.Nbd2 Be7=.



9...Nf6 10.Nc3 Be7 11.d3 0–0 12.Qd2? [12.a4!] **12...b5 13.Nd5?** Positional mistake. **13...Nxd5 14.cxd5 Bd7 15.h3 f5**



Black has achieved an advantage: space on both flanks, dynamic pawn chains combined with a pair of bishops. **16.Nh2 Bh4 17.Rf1 Bg5 18.Qe2 Qe8 19.Bc1 f4** A human move ("trading pieces causing the position to simplify with higher drawing chances"), computer suggests to keep pawn tension by playing 19...Be7 or exchange on c1. **20.f3 a5 21.a3 a4 22.Qb2** Or 22.b4 cxb4 23.axb4 Bd8 with Black's advantage: passed pawn a4, Black square bishop Bb6. **22...axb3 23.Qxb3 Bh4 24.Bd2 h5** It is confining the activity of Nh2. **25.Be1 Bg3 26.Bf2 Qg6 27.Kh1 Ra4 28.Ra2 Rfa8 29.Rfa1 Bxf2 30.Rxf2 Qe8 31.Rfa2 Qc8 32.Nf1 R8a7 33.Kh2 Kh7 34.Nd2 g5 35.Qd1 g4**

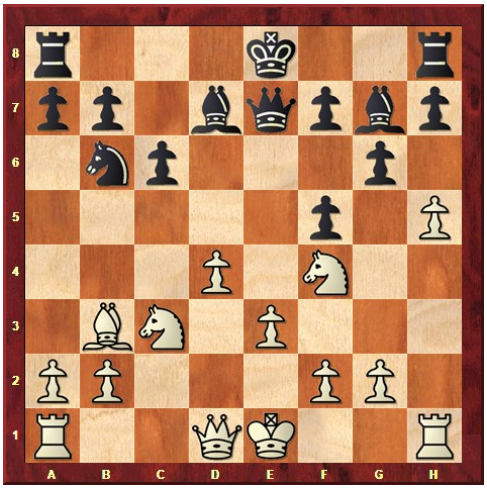


36.hxg4 hxg4 37.fxg4 Bxg4 38.Qe1 Kh8 39.Kg1 Rh7 40.Nf1 Raa7 41.Rb2 Qe8 42.Nh2 Bd7 43.g3 fxg3 44.Nf1 Ra8 45.Nxg3 Qg6 46.Rh2 Rxh2 47.Kxh2

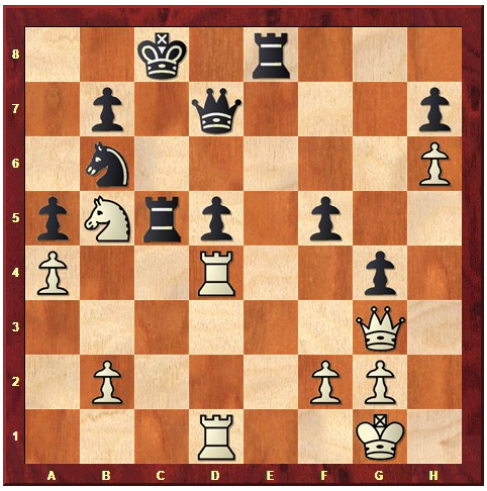
Qh6+ 48.Kg1 Rg8 49.Ra2 Qh4 50.Rh2 Bh3 51.Kh1 Rxg3 52.Qf2 Kg7 53.a4 bxa4 54.d4 cxd4 55.Qb2 Rg1+ 56.Kxg1 Qe1# 0–1

NM Y. Barnakov – GM Alonso Zapata
(2245) (2533)
Georgia State Ch., 5-18-2019

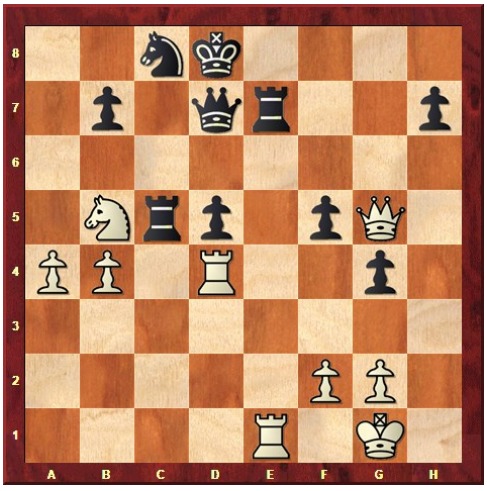
1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 g6 3.Bxf6 exf6 4.e3 Bg7 5.Ne2 d5 6.h4 f5 7.Nf4 c6 8.c4 dxc4 9.Bxc4 Qe7 10.Nc3 Nd7 11.h5 Nb6 12.Bb3 Bd7



13.a4 a5 14.0–0 Qd6 15.Qf3 g5 16.Nfe2 Be6 17.Bxe6 fxe6 18.h6 Bf6 19.Qh5+ Kd8 20.e4 Qd7 21.d5 exd5 22.exd5 cxd5 23.Rfd1 Rc8 24.Qf3 Rc5 25.Nd4 Bxd4 26.Rxd4 Re8 27.Qg3 g4 28.Rad1 Kc8 29.Nb5



29...Re6 30.b3 Rg6 31.Qf4 Re6 32.Qd2 Kd8 33.Qxa5 Rxh6 34.Qd2 Re6 35.Qg5+ Re7 36.Re1 Nc8 37.b4 1–0



Editor's note: *Once Black moves his rook, Qg8+ will be devastating. A fantastic performance by NM Barnakov.* ■

2020 All-Girls State Chess Championship

by Jonathan Rasberry

Fifty-two girls competed in the 3rd annual Alabama All-Girls State Chess Championship on February 22nd in Madison. The girls competed across three age sections: high school (K-12), middle school (K-6), and primary (K-3) sections. After taking a half-point bye in the first round, **Constance Wang**, 9th grade, finished with 3.5/4 to take clear first place in the championship section. In the final round, Wang defeated defending champion and top-seeded Sarvagna Velidandla to take her first All-Girls state title. (See p. 12.) Pending approval by the Alabama State Chess board in April, Wang will be nominated to be the Alabama representative to the Ruth Haring All Girls National Championship.

Champions seem to run in the Wang blood as **Caroline Wang**, 6th grader and Constance's sister, won outright the K-6 section with a perfect

Photo by Scott Wilhelm.

Photos by Scott Wilhelm.

score of 5/5. Top-seeded Nirvana Rajbhandari had a great tournament scoring 4/5, but in the 3rd round was taken down by the young up-and-coming Advitiya Kana who Wang subsequently conquered, leading to her clear title.

In the K-3 section, three co-champions were crowned with scores of 4/5: **Samsara Rajbhandari**, 3rd grade, **Emma Kuang**, 3rd grade, and **Annabelle Hsu**, kindergarten. Both Rajbhandari and Kuang were among the favorites heading into the tournament, with Rajbhandari leading in the final round with 4/4. With Hsu's final round upset victory leading to the three-way tie for first, Hsu became one of the youngest ever champions in an Alabama state chess championship section of any kind.

Team awards were also given out with **Bob Jones High School** (Madison) winning the K-12 section, **Discovery Middle School** (Madison) taking the K-6 section crown, and **Rainbow Elementary School** (Madison) taking first in the K-3 section.

The state of Alabama looks forward to the brilliant chess produced by each of these champions as they all continue to improve, and especially looks forward to the continued growth of all women's chess in Alabama in the years to come.

For the tournament's final standings, pairings, and team results, visit the Madison City Chess League's website: https://madisonchess.com/tournaments/2020-alabama-all-girls-state-chess-championship/standings. ■

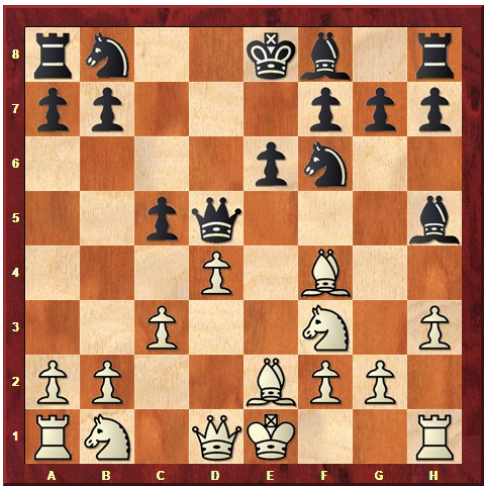
Wang-Velidandla

Game submitted by Ranae Bartlett; annotations by Michael Bartlett Guthrie

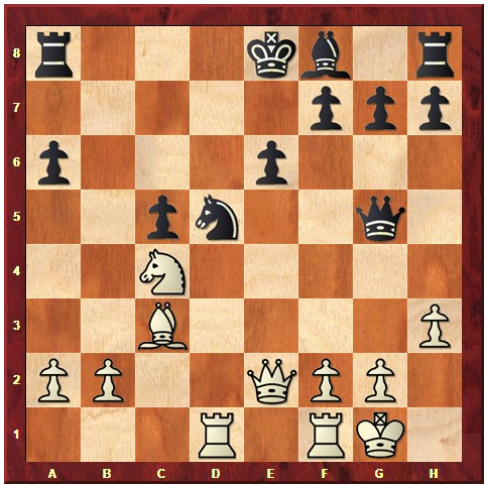
Left: Constance Wang, 2020 K-12 All-Girls Alabama State Champion. Right: Sarvagna Velidandla, the defending champion. Photos by Scott Wilhelm.

Constance Wang – S. Velidandla
(1433) (1825)
2020 All-Girls State Ch., 2/22/2020
G/45, d5

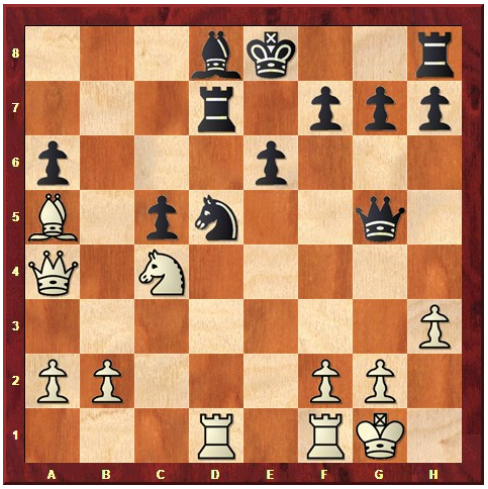
1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 Qxd5 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3 Bg4 6.Be2 e6 7.h3 Bh5 8.Bf4?!



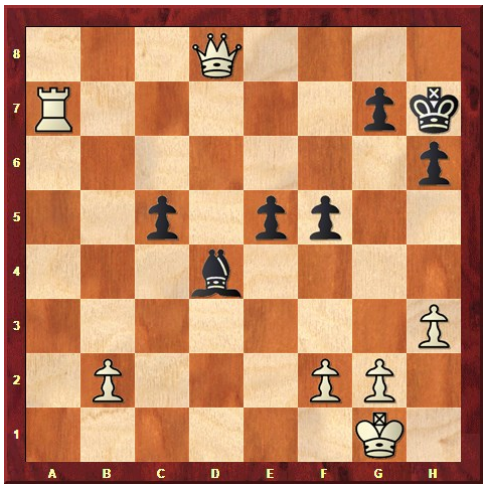
The bishop is better placed on e3, where it can put pressure on the c5 pawn while also defending d4. **8...Nc6 9.Na3?** This loses a pawn with correct play from Black. 9.0–0 was best here. **9...a6?!** [9...cxd4 10.cxd4 Bb4+! 11.Bd2 Bxf3! 12.Bxf3 Qxd4 13.Bxc6+ bxc6 14.Bxb4 Qxb4+ 15.Qd2 Qe4+ 16.Kf1∓] **10.Nc4 Qd8?!** Black retreats to defend against the threat of Nb6. 10...Bxf3 is strong here, as White's light-squared bishop is overloaded defending the knight on c4 and cannot recapture. 11.gxf3∓. **11.Nfe5!?** White sacrifices a pawn in an effort to improve their pieces. **11...Bxe2 12.Qxe2 cxd4 13.Nxc6 bxc6 14.Rd1 c5 15.0–0 Nd5 16.Be5!+-** The only move that keeps a strong advantage. **16...dxc3 17.Bxc3 Qg5**



18.Qd3 [18.f4!! leads to a forced win: 18...Nxf4 19.Rxf4 Qxf4 20.Be5 Qg5 21.Qf3 Rd8 22.Qc6+ Ke7 23.Qxc5+ Ke8 24.Qc6+ Ke7 25.Bd6+ Kf6 26.Rf1+ Kg6 27.Ne5+ Kh5 28.Qf3+ Kh6 29.Nxf7++-] **18...Rd8?** [18...Be7= and Black has nothing to worry about here.] **19.Ba5! Rd7 20.Qb3 Be7 21.Qa4!** Taking advantage of the rook's awkward positioning on d7. **21...Bd8**



22.Nb6??–+ [22.Nd6+! is completely winning for White. 22...Ke7 23.Nc8+ *(or the simple 23.Nxf7 Kxf7 24.Qxd7++-)* 23...Ke8 24.f4+-] **22...Nxb6??** [22...Bxb6! 23.Bxb6 Nxb6–+] **23.Bxb6+- 0–0 24.Rxd7 Bxb6 25.Qxa6 Bd8 26.Qd6 Bf6 27.Qd2 Qe5 28.a4!** [28.b3! is a more positional approach that simply puts the pawns on light squares, where Black cannot easily attack them because of the dark-squared bishop.] **28...Qb8 29.a5 Qb5 30.Ra1 Ra8 31.a6! Bd4** [31...Rxa6?? 32.Rd8+ Bxd8 33.Qxd8+ Qe8 34.Qxe8#] **32.Rb7 Qc6 33.Qf4 Qe8 34.a7 e5 35.Qe4 f5?! 36.Qd5+ Kf8 37.Qd6+ Kg8 38.Rb8 Rxb8 39.Qxb8 Qxb8 40.axb8Q+ Kf7 41.Qd6 h6 42.Ra7+ Kg8 43.Qd8+** [43.Qg6 leads to a faster mate: 43...e4 44.Ra8#] **43...Kh7**



Black soon lost on time: **1–0.** ■

The Winner's Circle

Photos by Caesar Lawrence & Scott Varagona

Right: 2020 Queen of Hearts Premiere Section champion, NM Yury Barnakov. Photo by Caesar Lawrence.

Below: 2019 Dothan Open Reserve Champions. Alabama's Shawn Choi (far left) shows great promise! Photo by TD C. Lawrence.

Above: 2019 Magic City Classic Premiere Section winners, Epiphany Peters and Scott Varagona. Photo by Caesar Lawrence.

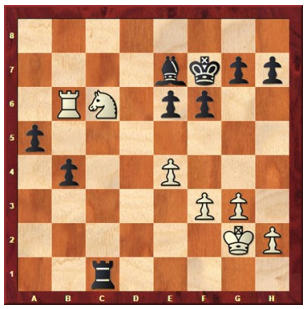
Left: 2019 Magic City Classic Reserve Champion Dongwen Cao (center) with TD Caesar Lawrence. Photo by Antics Editor.

Baskarraj-Savoie

By Samuel Baskarraj

Baskarraj,S (1517) - Savoie,W (1600)
Queen of Hearts 2020 (Rd 5), 2-8-2020

This is the first time I was playing in the Premiere Section. I know that it's going to be tough, but the pressure is not on me, as I am the lowest rated player in the section. Already I played three games and lost all three except the bye that I got the first round. I played with one of the greatest players of Alabama, Aaron DeCord. The game was very exciting till the end of the middlegame when I missed a tactic and he took advantage. I had the White side against William Savoie. This is a really interesting game as I play against an experienced player who enjoys playing even juniors like me. **1.d4 d5** Recently I have started playing the Queen's Gambit, and one of the most common variations you will see is the Slav Defense. One of the first steps of trying a new opening is researching the variations that your opponent will play. Knowing this, I prepared against the Slav especially. **2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 e6 5.Bf4 dxc4 6.e3** Playing a4 before playing e3 would be good to secure the pawn on c4. **6...b5 7.a4 Bb4 8.Qc2 Qa5 9.Bxb8** This move 9.Bxb8 is bad for many reasons, particularly the bishop on f4 is developed and it shouldn't be traded for a knight on b8, an undeveloped piece. **9...Rxb8 10.g3** This move is also bad as I had moved e3. g3 along with e3 would create light square weaknesses ("holes"). **10...Nd5 11.Rc1 0–0 12.Ne5 Qc7 13.Bg2 a6 14.0–0 f6 15.Nf3 Nb6 16.axb5 cxb5 17.Na2 Be7 18.b3 Bb7 19.bxc4 Nxc4 20.Nd2 Bxg2 21.Kxg2 Rfc8** Allowing White to sort of penetrate the shield with 22.Qe4. **22.Qe4 Qb7 23.Qxb7 Rxb7 24.Rc3 Nb6 25.Rfc1 Rxc3 26.Rxc3 b4 27.Rc6 Kf7** 27...Kf7 is bad; it allows White to take control of the a5 square with the move Nb3. **28.Nb3 Rb8** 28...Rb8 may be a waste of time; probably Ke8 would've been better. **29.Rc7** This may be okay but it allows Black to have a major pawn-push and have a leverage square (d5) to attack a piece and gain a move. 29...Nd5 is a little bit slow. **29...Nd5 30.Ra7 Rb6 31.Nac1 Rc6 32.e4 Nc3 33.f3 Nb5 34.Rb7 Nxd4 35.Nxd4 Rxc1 36.Rb6 a5 37.Nc6** This is hope-chess with the move 37.Nc6 but I was really desperate at this point. 37...Rxc6 is very interesting.* The next few moves are me trying to gain an advantage with tricks/tactics. **37...Rc5 38.Nd4 Rc4 39.Nb5 a4 40.Rb7** Threatening 41.Nd6+. **40...Rc2+ 41.Kh3 Rd2 42.Na7 Ke8 43.Nc6 Rd7 44.Rb8+ Kf7 45.Nxb4 a3 46.Nc6 Bc5 47.Ra8 Rc7 48.Na5 Be7 49.Nb3 Rc3 50.Nd4 Rd3 51.Nc6 Rc3** Maybe keeping the bishop was a better option for Black. **52.Nxe7 Kxe7 53.Ra7+ Kf8** Moving to the back rank is not a good decision. **54.Kg4 f5+** Allowing White to "walk in" very easily with Kf4, Ke5, etc. **55.Kf4 h6 56.Ke5 fxe4 57.fxe4 Re3 58.Ra8+ Kf7 59.Ra7+ Kg8 60.Kf4 Re2 61.h4 a2 62.Kf3 Rb2 63.g4 e5 64.g5 h5 65.g6 Rb3+ 66.Ke2 Rb2+ 67.Kd3 Kf8 68.Kc4 Re2 69.Kd5 Rb2 70.Kxe5 Rf2 71.Ra8+ Ke7 72.Ra7+ Kd8 73.Kd6 Kc8** Running away from the pawns on the g- and h-files is not a good choice. **74.e5 Kb8 75.Ra4 Rd2+ 76.Ke6 Re2 77.Kf7 Rxe5 78.Rxa2 Re4 79.Rh2 Kc7 80.Kxg7 Kd7 81.Kh6 Ke7 82.Kxh5 Kf8 83.Kh6 Kg8 84.h5 Rf4 85.Kg5 Rf1 86.Rg2 1–0** ■



Position after 37.Nc6

** Indeed, after 37...Rxc6! 38.Rxc6 a4, Black threatens simply ...a4-a3-a2-a1=Q. White can try to prevent this with Ra6, Rc2, or Rc1, but in every case, Black cannot be stopped from getting pawns to a3 & b3, and a pawn duo on the 6th rank is known to defeat a rook. Black would win. –Ed*

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Tentative Tournaments

Important Note: Any tournaments listed here (or on the ACF website) are very tentative, and may be subject to change or cancellation due to coronavirus concerns. See www.alabamachess.org for updates on these and other events.

May 23	**The Vulcan**	**Birmingham, AL**
July 11	**Alabama Dual Chess Championship**	**Montgomery, AL**

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